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THE CHURCH'S TASK IN THE NEW AGE

BY

WILLIAM PALMER LADD, M. A., B. D.,
DEAN OF THE BERKELEY DIVINITY SCHOOL



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As the war draws to an end we become increasingly aware that we are approaching a new era in the life of the nation, and indeed in the history of our civilization. The old world into which we were born and in which we grew up, the social, economic, and political world of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the world we have been so familiar with and habituated to, is in a state of decline and fall. It is still with us indeed. Except in Russia, the stress and emergency of the war has kept it together. In this country, so little racked as yet with the misery of the great conflict, it preserves with much success its former outward appearance. But here and everywhere its inner vitality is sapped. Its friends speak in whispers. A fatal end impends. It is about to pass from the scene forever and be reckoned, as the soldiers say, a "casualty."

As Christians and as Churchmen we do not need to bewail its demise. It was not a Christian world. It was without understanding, dull in conscience, shallow in heart. It was mad with the love of what the New Testament calls the root of all kinds of evil. The material luxury it sought and cultivated is the enemy of the things of the spirit. It was deaf to the appeal of the cross, uninterested in the missionary enterprises of the Church, unresponsive to the Christian appeal for brotherhood and social justice. Above all, it was too content with itself to be in any sense a Christian world. We will not regret its death and we can turn with courage and alacrity to the task of creating in its stead a new world which shall be not only better but of a better kind.

This is all of course only figurative language. There are in life no clean-cut endings and beginnings. The periods and epochs into which the historian divides human progress have no actual existence. Nowhere shall we reach the end of the old or the beginning of the new. The new has, in fact, already come. We are living already in a new world, with its new hopes and fears, its searching questionings, and imperative call to action.

Our whole national outlook has changed with the tide of recent events. With what rather languid interest we were once accustomed to read of European discussions over spheres of influence in northern Africa, or of the rival constructions of strategic railways in Asia, or of the periodic bomb-throwings which so often accompanied the peregrinations of the royalties of the old world! Now even the dullest can understand how such things have plunged our peace-loving nation into a great war. We can no longer sit apart from the nations as listless spectators of their affairs. The old policy of careless isolation has broken down. We have suddenly become active participators in the politics of the world, and have taken an important place in the family of nations.

A short time since how little did we regard the lives and interests of the strange colonies of European folk which were to be found in the great industrial centres of this and other states! Now, even the undemocratic have been aroused by the shock of the war to take up with energy the task of the "Americanization," as it is called, of these our foreign-born fellow citizens. We are acquiring a new and more humane conception of our civic duties of every sort. We are almost daily startled at the strides that we find can be taken without protest toward the transformation of selfish, long-established habits. We welcome government regulation of the details of our daily lives, the management of our food, drink, clothing, transportation, and, what is more, we are voluntarily responding to government appeals and submitting ourselves to regulations of various kinds. Some are learning for the first time that sacrifice and service are an integral part of life. Most important and significant of all is the splendid enthusiasm with which the young men of the nation have responded to the call to military service, a response which is at once a break with the old and the promise of a new and better order, wherein so fine a spirit shall find some worthy field for its expression and exercise.

And now must we not face the difficult but extremely important question, how shall the spirit of the Church respond to the new spirit in the nation? How shall the Church change with the changing age? For the fact that the Church will continue to preach its everlasting

gospel, to teach its doctrines and administer its sacraments, to train men in faith and love and duty, need not blind us to the fact that it must adapt these things to the new needs of the time, and bring out of its treasure things new, as well as things old. "The Church changes", says Newman, "that it may remain the same." It has changed in every age. Change is one of the marks of the true Church. We are bound to ask ourselves, then, what ought the Church to undertake to do in the face of the new needs and new opportunities in the national life? What ought to be its policy and programme?

For some help towards answering this question may I ask you to look back with me at the history of the Church, and to consider for a moment how it has, in fact, fulfilled its mission in the changing order of the civilization of Western Europe.

When the Christian Church began its career in the world a great Empire was in possession. It looms in the background of the New Testament picture. Caesar Augustus sends out a decree that the whole world shall be taxed, Pontius Pilate governs Judea, Claudius banishes Christian Jews from Rome, the Apostle Paul, a free-born Roman citizen, is taken across the Mediterranean to make his appeal in Rome before the judgment seat of the Emperor Nero.

Within this great Empire, so prosperous, so successful, and invincible, imposing its rule on the whole civilized world and giving peace and order to the nations, the Church grew into being; a small, voluntary society, made up in large measure of the humble and the poor, organized on the principles of democracy, filled with the spirit of brotherhood, seeking a heavenly not an earthly kingdom. Ignored at first, it spread both in adversity and prosperity. It became the rival of the empire, and, when the empire fell, the Church lived on, gathering to itself the best traditions and hopes of mankind.

In the mediaeval period there fell to the Church what it had in the earlier period despised, a kingdom upon this earth. It took up the burden of civilization which the Empire had dropped. It threw itself into the stream of the world's life. It acquired property and learned to defend it. In a time of confusion its bishops were constrained to act as civil magistrates and administrators. Learning and the arts survived

under its protection. Men's minds as well as their persons and possessions owned its sway. All humanity and all human life became its province. Every social activity, art, science, literature, trade, industry, politics, war, passed within the dominating influence of the all-powerful Church. At its head was a pope. And we shall hardly understand or do justice to the mediaeval papacy unless we are willing to see it at its best and to understand how it was lured on by the splendid ideal of a unitary state, a "league of nations" if you will, ruled by the best, a divine gospel, and a vicar of the Perfect One, a servant of the servants of God. These were the ages of faith, and the supreme act of faith was the Church's faith in itself, so stupendous that it did not hesitate to put through the torture of the Inquisition those who dissented from its rule, in order that they might be relieved of the tortures of eternal damnation.

In the modern period, which begins with the outbreak of the Protestant reformation, the Church loses its unique and privileged place. The nations become independent of the Church, and one after another of the various human activities which were once the nurslings of the Church pass out of its control. In the Protestant world corporate religion falls into discredit, and an individualised religion takes its place. Subjective experience becomes all-important. If the dominant note of the early period of the Church was that of a kingdom in heaven, and of the mediaeval period that of a kingdom on earth, the last period has, in general, sought its kingdom within the mind of man. In the modern period, too, with the advent of natural science, has come the painstaking study of the Church's scriptures and of its traditional doctrines, resulting in a more adequate understanding of the essentials of the Christian faith. And the Church has in some degree, we may hope, risen out of the ignorance and worldliness which in the middle ages so greatly neutralized its efforts for good.

We are living to-day at the beginning, perhaps, of another great age in the life of the Church. Can we relate our hopes for this new age to the Christian tradition of the centuries past? How shall we do so?

From the early period we can and must revive something of that passion for brotherhood and fellowship which characterized the first

Christian communities. We must recover, too, the unity of organization which was the necessary embodiment of that spirit of brotherhood and fellowship. We must conquer our unchristian sectarian rivalries and divisions and exemplify within ourselves the Christian principle of neighborly love before we can ever advance to large conquests against the powers of evil in the world without.

We shall not underestimate our inheritance from the modern period. We may hope to retain its respect for conscience, its appreciation of the worth of the individual and of the subjective elements in religion, its zeal for truth.

But to-day are we not looking for some larger conception of religion than that which has prevailed so widely since the days of Luther and Calvin? In the Church as in the nation the need is for something more uplifting and compelling than even the best form of individualism. We seek the conversion of individuals, yes; but how impotent is the converted individual in an unconverted society! Individual penitence, yes; but a collection of penitent individuals will never make a regenerate society and what we really need is whole nations, cities, communities, Churches, penitent, and doing works meet for repentance.

So we are brought back, are we not? to face the task which confronted the mediaeval Church, and to desire nothing less than the redemption of society itself. Recognizing that individual redemption can become effective only in a redeemed social order, our ambition must be to win acceptance of the gospel by society no less than by the individual. We shall desire to bring our religion to bear on all the social activities of the modern world, and to labor for a new politics, a new trade, a new industry, a new art, literature, and science, permeated through and through with the Christian ideal. The mediaeval Church grievously failed; and this was in part, certainly, for the reason that it never frankly faced its task. We, too, may fail; but at least we can frankly avow our purpose, and can set ourselves consciously, and, if we will, with devotion and hope, to the task of building up here on this earth in our own time a veritable kingdom of God.

If we look toward the political sphere, we must needs see in the present international situation an inspiring challenge to Christian effort.

Our country has come to a moment of extraordinary opportunity. The thoughtful Christian believer cannot doubt that God has chosen this people as truly as of old he chose the Israelites for a work of peculiar service to the nations of the world. "We fight," says President Wilson, "without rancor and without selfish object, seeking nothing for ourselves but what we shall wish to share with all free peoples." We know this to be true; our motives are pure. We are free from many of the age-long prejudices which afflict peoples less young than ourselves. Our resources in money and in other sorts of wealth are immeasurable, and for the most part untouched by the war. We are, in fact, in a position to work effectively for a peace settlement on the principles of charity no less than justice, and for an era of good-will following peace. National animosities and rivalries have been beyond measure sharpened and embittered by the war; they will not quickly subside. On the other hand friendships have been formed and tested and deepened. We face a day of decision. Are we to build our new national and international politics on the friendship and go on to greater friendships, or on the rivalries and go on to a round of unending rivalry? It is a question. But there ought to be no question as to the Church's mind, and as to the side on which the whole impact of its influence should be brought to bear. Nor can there be any doubt that the influence which the Christian Church could exert would be decisive, and fruitful of enormous good.

Our people have made sacrifices during the war for our allies. We have done it in order to win the war. But when the danger is past, and enthusiasm dies down, what shall we do? How about the restoration of shattered towns and devastated provinces? How about the feeding of hungry friends and enemies? How about the war debts of the nations which fought for our liberties long before we entered the war? Shall our rich fortunate country come to the rescue as a Christian brother and bear all it can of the common burden, or shall we hug our wealth and draw back into a selfish national indifference to the misfortunes of the old world? What shall the Church do to inspire the nation to great adventures in helpfulness, to a chivalrous spirit adequate to the needs of humanity? This is our day of decision. It is a time, certainly, for

the Church to revive all its traditions, and they are many and glorious, which identify it with works of friendliness and reconciliation and unification, a time to cultivate that pure religion which is so potent a force in destroying the barriers between nations, which ignorance and indifference, sloth, pride, and prejudice so readily and effectively build.

Again, consider what it might mean to win the acceptance of Christian principles in trade. It is a truism to say that trade as now carried on is war. Conducted under rules, to be sure, and with some regard to public opinion, as all warfare is, with a certain mercy to the non-combatant and to those who are put *hors de combat*, but in general ruled only by expediency, essentially unfeeling, giving its rewards now to the strongest, now to the possessing and privileged.

In the present crisis all governments have in an unprecedented way undertaken the supervision of trade and finance, and regulated them for the common good. But after the war what? The world will be poorer by many billions. There will be a demand for capitalistic effort, and a rush for trade advantage. There will be a temptation to foster monopolies, to favor the few at the expense of the many, and to indulge in new forms of corporate selfishness. It must be the part of the Church to help in the creation of a new standard of business ethics superior to the old. The Church must press home Plato's question, "What is justice?" And it must not be put off with an answer which conforms to existing convention, but does not satisfy conscience, nor fit the realities of life. Business can doubtless be so organized that its rewards shall go less generally than now to the shrewd and merciless, and more often to the generous and public-spirited, and conditions can be secured that will make of a business career an opportunity for altruistic service as promising as the Christian ministry itself.

Time fails for an exercise of the imagination on the application in detail of Christian principles to the many realms of social activity, to industry and art, literature, philosophy, and education. Industrial problems will certainly press for solution after the war. The situation will not be met by improvement of conditions merely. There must be a new order. The demand of the worker for a life of self-respecting freedom, for the opportunity to exercise individuality and the creative

impulse in his work, for a larger share in the control, and a larger financial return from the product, of his labor is sure to grow more urgent. The clergy if they are ever to make this Church a Church of the whole people and not the Church of a class simply must become the champions of other interests than those of the wealthy and privileged. They must give the Church some worthy share in the furtherance of the coming industrial democracy. Art to the Christian must cease to be merely the plaything of the rich; it must be, as it was in the Middle Ages, of the people and for the people; the Church has no more honorable tradition than that it has been the patron of the arts and the promoter of civilization and culture. Literature, philosophy, and education can under the touch of the Gospel receive an access of life, and gain a new dignity and usefulness as they take their place in the new order, the Kingdom of God.

Such is the task that confronts the Church. It is not a small or an easy one. Indeed a programme so large may well seem impracticable or perhaps unattainable for any Church, even one much more enlightened or Christian than any that exists or is likely to exist in our time. But to the Christian disciple the question should not be how difficult? but how right? No task need be too large or arduous for a Church with a divine mission, a Church which can be, to use Augustine's phrase, "patient because eternal."

And there is another and peculiar reason why our generation may go on with confidence and hope. We have at our hand a great, hitherto unused, source of power; long known, it is true, in name, and much acclaimed, but little understood, and quite unrecognized in the greatness of its possibilities for good. I refer to Christian education. Upon education and its unused resources thoughtful men to-day are resting their hopes for reforming and rebuilding the world after the war. Upon Christian education, if it be of the right quality, the Church may well rely.

This brings us to the subject of education for the ministry—which must be the urgent concern, obviously, of any plan of Christian education. The educational institution where we are met is engaged primarily in the work of training candidates for the Christian ministry.

And it is the importance of such work to the Church and to society, always great but doubly so in these critical times, that gives a special significance to the exercises of this day.

In a few months we shall see our young men by the tens of thousands returning from the trenches across the sea, returning, many of them, we cannot doubt, with the grim determination in their hearts that the sacrifices they and their brethren have made shall not have been in vain, but that the new world they are to have a hand in building shall be fashioned into a different world from the old, and a better one. Many are the forms of service which will lie open before these young men. There will be opportunities unparalleled for business men, for captains of industry, for labor leaders, for philanthropists, for educators. Even a commonplace vocation like farming will take on enormous romance when it may be the means of producing food for a world which during four years has been neglecting plows and pruning hooks for spears and swords, and in consequence, as some think, actually faces starvation.

Some of these young men will offer themselves for the Christian ministry. They will not be deterred because the task set before them is too great or the Church's ideal pitched too high. But they will expect, and they will have the right to expect, that the education offered them shall be adequate to the greatness of the task to which they are ready to devote their lives. It is our privilege to plan and to provide for them such an adequate education.

What, then, could be considered an adequate and worthy training for the life and work of those who will offer themselves for the ministry of the Christian Church? It may be possible to summarize briefly some of its chief characteristics.

In the first place, education for the ministry should partake of the qualities of all good education. It should cultivate accuracy in thinking, clarity in expression, appreciation of the true, the good, and the beautiful, discipline of the will, self-knowledge. It should eschew the wholesale, mechanical methods of the modern American university system, so alien and inferior to our English tradition. It should never be deceived into thinking that the classification, evaluation, and

aggregation of subjects and courses has any important part to play in real education, nor should it attempt to force the expanding intellectual life of the eager learner into traditional ways of thought and fields of study which are so often, probably, as distasteful and depressing to his instructor as to the student himself. Good education should encourage spontaneity, freedom, and individuality. It should fit for life. In short, a divinity school, like any other school, would, if it were efficient, somehow contrive to bring the best and most significant things to bear upon the life and thought of the student, it would provide that individual attention which makes for the elimination of faults and the encouragement of all right effort, it would create an atmosphere and environment wherein the student's powers could develop naturally in their full strength, it would seek to prepare him to become the most useful possible member of the society in which he is to live and work.

Second, education for the ministry must mean special training in religious devotion and Christian character. The divinity school differs essentially from a university faculty in that it is a Christian school. The divinity school professor in the relation he may assume toward his pupils is quite unlike a professor of medicine or law. He cannot escape the responsibility of being the pastor, guide, counsellor, and friend as well as the class-room preceptor to those whom the Church has committed to his care. We may assume that earnest devotion exists in those who seek a training in divinity, but the fresh, warm zeal of the new-comer sometimes, it is to be feared, finds the dissecting method of the ordinary lecture room a chilling and disappointing experience. This may be inevitable and healthy as a beginning, but it should not be the end. The student's progress through the divinity school course should be a progress in deepening religious conviction and in Christian character.

Third, it should be, obviously, an education not only in the art of living, but in the arts and occupations peculiar to the ministerial and priestly calling. The ordinand must be trained in the conduct of worship, in reading, preaching, and music. He should be trained in pastoral work and in whatever practical activities may be essential to his professional efficiency.

Fourth, it should furnish a knowledge of the Christian tradition and of Christian truth. This may mean great learning. Ill betide the Church which has no great thinkers and investigators engaged in the pursuit of truth for its own sake, able by their clearer vision to shepherd the multitude into the superior path. The work of creative scholarship belongs more, perhaps, to the theological university than to the divinity school which trains for the parochial ministry. But every training school for the clergy must cultivate that love of the truth, that openness of mind, that patience and humility in learning, which are the fruits of scholarship and science at its best.

In the fifth place it should give to the candidate for the ministry some knowledge and understanding of the world in which he is to live and to exercise his office. It is here that the traditional divinity curriculum most needs revision. If the Church's task is to be the redemption of society, the people will expect of the clergy very intelligent and very well-informed leadership. If the Church is to fulfil its mission to all mankind the clergy must be men who can understand, minister to, and win the allegiance of their fellow men of whatever vocation, political creed, financial status, social position, or moral condition. They must understand movements as well as men, and learn to win them in the only possible way, namely, by recognizing whatever in them is true, and by bearing witness to and claiming for the glory of the Christian God and his kingdom whatever in them is beautiful and good. They must make the acquaintance of the bad as well as the good in men and in movements. It is, as a matter of fact, within the best Christian tradition that the clergy should be men of affairs. Cyprian, Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, Arnold of Brescia, Hugh of Lincoln, John Colet, Vincent de Paul, John Wesley, Charles Kingsley are representative names in the history of the Church. There have been such men in almost every age. There are such among the clergy to-day—men who can read the signs of their time, who can sympathize with the thoughts and feelings of all serious-minded men and women, who can coöperate understandingly with all forces for good and can thus bring the power of Christ and his Church to bear in fullest measure on their day and generation. It is not necessary that the divinity student should take all

knowledge for his province, but a little learning may easily result in a large sympathy, an access of humility, and a desire for greater knowledge. Such a result his training should achieve.

But Christian education means, of course, much more than education for the ministry; and divinity schools may well become places where many others beside candidates for the ministry shall seek counsel, and religious teaching, and intellectual guidance. Education is not something only for the young. There is no standing still in the intellectual life, no point where we are beyond the need for fresh stimulus and new outlooks. Reading is an essential part of the well-ordered clerical life, and guidance in reading may well come from a divinity school faculty, whose members have the training and the leisure for acquiring knowledge which the parish priest does not usually enjoy. Instruction for layreaders, organists, Sunday School teachers, and other parochial workers could also be successfully carried on from the divinity school as a centre.

And this enlargement of its field of usefulness would greatly enrich the divinity school itself. Those who came to it from the outside would bring the practical knowledge, the sympathy, the spirit of earnestness and the zeal which it is the privilege of the parish priest and the active Church worker to gather in full measure from their first-hand experience in meeting human needs. Few ethical and practical problems are solved by the labor of the solitary thinker. Light upon difficulties is more likely to come from bringing together the report of the experiences of many lives. The divinity school should be a place for conference and the exchange and supplementing of experiences. Such coöperation between the school and the parish would seem to be an ideal condition for promoting in an effective way the Church's mission of redemption.

That the Berkeley Divinity School may live up to the highest ideals, educational and Christian, is, I know, the desire of all who are met here to-day to do it honor. It is not only those who love it who can see in it a favored place. Situated in the oldest diocese of this Church, and in a state supreme in the industrial sphere and crammed with the foreign-born, it cannot escape contact with both the old and the new. Working

in closest harmony with all diocesan activities, yet completely independent of diocesan control, it draws its students year after year from widely separated dioceses, and sends out its graduates to every corner of the land. With a tradition of sane and large-minded churchmanship, with a record of devoted service, with the affectionate devotion of many sons, it may well look forward to a continuance of useful work for the spread in the world of the kingdom of Christ, and to a future which shall be worthy of its traditions, its opportunity, and the needs of the new age.

